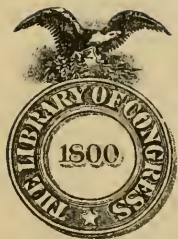


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Foscari
-by-
John B. White.



FOSCARI,

OR,

THE VENETIAN EXILE;

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE CHARLESTON THEATRE.

" For this Foscari, whose relentless fate
" Venice should blush to hear the muse relate,
" When Exile wore his blooming years away,
" To sorrows long soliliquies a prey,
" When reason, justice, vainly urg'd his cause,
" For this he rous'd her sanguinary laws:
" Glad to return, tho' hope could grant no more,
" And chains and tortures, hail'd him to the shore."
Pleasures of Memory.

BY JOHN B. ^{White} WHITE, ESQ.

CHARLESTON: S. C.

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1806.

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D.M.
1900

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY A FRIEND,

AND SPOKEN BY MR. STORY.

OFT on these boards, as love or rage inspir'd,
The Muse of Shakspeare has your bosoms fir'd ;
And oft the tender scene by Otway drawn,
Has fill'd your eyes with sorrows not your own.
Then while with lib'ral hand you thus reward,
And crown with Fame full many a foreign bard,
To night we hope, though humbler be his strain,
A native Poet will not sue in vain.

To distant climes his Muse adventurous flies,
Where Venice points her turrets to the skies ;
His story simple, natural and brief,
A tender record of domestic grief ;—
A maid of matchless merit, doom'd to prove
The heart-felt agony of hopeless love ;—
A father's peace, by laws too stern undone ;
A mother, mourning for her exil'd son :—
That son, defying mis'ry's keenest dart,
For friends that closely twin'd around his heart ;
And falling cheerful in the villain's toil,
To tread once more his dear-lov'd, native soil.
On scenes like these, our author rests his cause,
And trembling, doubts, yet strives for your applause :—
Ah ! be not too severe—with gentle hand
Cherish this scion of your native land :
To *all* your care, his offspring he commends,
Ye gen'rous patrons, countrymen, and friends.
But chief to you, ye fair, he gently sues,
For who will dare to blame, if you refuse ?
Be kind, then—gild your Poet's humble name,
Your smile is vict'ry, your applause is fame !

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Doge of Venice,	-	-	-	Mr. WHITLOCK.
Foscari, (<i>Son to the Doge, supposed murderer of Count Almor Donato, one of the Council of Ten</i>)	-	-	-	HARDINGE.
President of the Council,	-	-	-	CLAUDE.
Count Nicholas Erizzo, (<i>A noble Venetian one of the Council of ten</i>)	-	-	-	STORY.
Policarpo,	-	(<i>An Assassin</i>)	-	CLARK.
Gomez, (<i>The jailor, a comrade of Policarpo</i>)	-	-	-	CROMWELL.
Secretary,	-	-	-	SIERSON.
Officer,	-	-	-	DYKES.

WOMEN.

Lady Valeria,	(<i>Wife to the Doge</i>)	Mrs. WHITLOCK.
Lady Almeria,	(<i>Daughter of Count Donato, formerly betrothed to Foscari</i>)	PLACIDE.
Anna,	} <i>Maids of Honor to Lady Valeria.</i>	{ DYKES.
Ursula,		
Attendants, Fishermen, &c.		

SCENE—in Venice.

See Dr. Moore's View of Society in Italy—Vol. 1—Letter 14.

FOSCARI,

OR,

THE VENETIAN EXILE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

*LADY VALERIA sitting in deep meditation; ANNA near her.
Plaintive Music from another Apartment. The
Music continues for some time.*

Lady VALERIA.

THOSE plaintive notes my Anna, please no more,
They yield no longer comfort to my soul ;
But wrapt in mournful reveries, I sit,
Instead of soothing my afflicted mind,
They wake my soul to keener sense of woe :—
This is a moment of too much suspense,
To listen to this plaintive melody.

Enter URSULA, in haste.

Urs. I Come my lady, to confirm the news ;
Thy son, indeed, is safely now arrived.

Val. Haste! haste!—Come, tell me all concerning
him :—

Speak ; arriv'd, say'st thou !—Landed in Venice ?

Urs. I saw, myself, the populace press down
In crowds ; and never since our Lord, the Doge,
Wedded the Adriatic, have I seen
Its shores so lined. Anxiety appear'd
In ev'ry countenance ; and, when I sought
The cause of the confusion, the cry was
Foscari !—Count Foscari !

Val. Most joyful news !

Thou say'st they ran to hail him to the shore ?

Urs. They did, my lady ; Venice seem'd in arms.

Val. O ! feast a mother's ears !—Come, tell her all
That in the least concerns her only son.
The bark—did'st thou behold the bark ?

Urs. With sails

All open to the breeze, she came ; Venice
Trembled with acclamations from the shore.

Val. But still, I will not yield myself to joy :—
Rest then awhile, thou fond and flutt'ring heart,
For at such tidings, is a parent's breast
Too narrow to contain its extacy.—

My heart will burst ; the contrast is too great
Between the high-ton'd transport of my soul,
And that sadness which should reign within me.

Anna. In truth, my lady, thou hast cause for joy
For can a mother's heart but feel delight,
When ev'ry tongue recounts her son's return ?

Val. Alas ! alas ! Thou but too little know'st
The horrid machinations of the world:
The worm that crawls the earth, can never fall
Beneath the lowly station, which it holds :
It owes its safety to its humble sphere,
And passes on, neglected and despis'd :—
But the imperial bird, is oft the object
Of the fowler's art, and falls into his snare ;
The mother's heart, securely sits at ease,
When on some plain she sees her infant sport ;
And all her anxious fears start up alarm'd,
When she beholds him at some dizzy height,
And no arm near, to snatch him from his doom.

Urs. But sure my lady, aid cannot be wanting
To snatch thy son from that same precipice,
While so many tongues——

Val. Indeed, 'tis even so
Each day's experience will confirm the fact.
A thousand causes may unloose the tongue,
And make it speak what's foreign to the heart ;
While ev'ry sinew of the arm, is cramped,
By griping av'rice ; vanity, or pride,
Selfe-love, or curiosity, will serve
Each in their turns, to make men sycophants.

To-day they'll fawn and flatter ; to-morrow,
 Make professions of regard and friendship ;
 But the next day, comes a blight of fortune---
 When straight they all are fled and disappear'd,
 Like birds of passage, at the winter's blast.

Anna. Yet, judge not too severely of the world,
 Nor think it always sway'd by sordid views.

Val. Ah! Words are light, they cost the givers nothing--
 Men proffer friendship till the trial comes ;
 And when those deeds that might advantage prove
 Are most desir'd, their zeal then quickly cools,
 And all their proffer'd friendship ends in words.

(Knocking without.)

What knocking 's that ?---O ! should it be my son !
 Haste thee, Anna !---Haste !---Admit him.

(Exeunt ANNA and URSULA.—Enter DOGE.)

My Lord !---

Doge. I come, my love, the bearer of blest news ;
 Our son---our lov'd Foscari is arriv'd.

Val. Then, hast thou seen him ?

Doge. That bliss is yet to come.

Val. My heart will burst with joy, tho' o'er th' event,
 A cloud of myst'ry hangs---I fear to think
 Of what may be the cause of his recal ;
 And tears alone can yield my soul relief.

Doge. Yet, bow submissive to the will of Heav'n,
 What ever is decreed above, by man,
 With silent resignation should be borne.

Val. But Heav'n hath bestow'd the privilege
 To weep, and gives us tears to mitigate
 Our grief.

Doge. Still, give some respite to thy sorrow :---
 Thou did'st not more than thus indulge thy grief,
 Whilst our unhappy boy dragged out his days,
 In exile.---Now, hast thou not cause for gladness ?

Val. Yes---I have cause for gladness, it is true ;
 But my heart has been so long attun'd to grief,
 It can't throw off its melancholy tone ;
 But yet will vibrate with the sound of sadness---
 Most terrible forbodings haunt my mind,
 And still my soul's prophetic eye, beholds

My Foscari, expos'd upon the wheel.—
I hear him groan !—I see him now expire !—

Doge. Trust me, my love, thy fears forebode far worse
Than possibly can happen—his innocence
Will yet appear, and still we may be happy.

Val. Too well I see the horrid plan, that's laid
Against the life and honor of our son.

My soul is sad—I know not why, my lord;
And far more heavy than 'twas wont to be :
The horrid visions which disturb my sleep,
Fill all my waking moments with despair.

Doge. Yield not thyself to such distressing thoughts ;
The task of meeting evils as they are,
Is not more arduous than resisting those
Which owe their rise to fancy.

Val. 'Tis true, my lord—
And often those created in the mind,
Press heavier on the soul, than real ills :—
To their uncertainty, they owe their weight.
My mind, worn down by anxious thoughts and cares,
Last night, I threw me on my couch and slept ;
But, while I slept : this horrid vision rose,
Methought I sat upon a lonely cliff,
Whose rough hewn brow, frown'd dreadful o'er the deep ;
And from this height, I overlook'd the main :—
A heavy cloud, seem'd rising from the north ;
The Adriatic, which 'till then was calm,
Now heav'd its bosom, and foretold a storm—
Vivid lightning flash'd upon the deep, whilst
The muttering roar of heavy thunder, told
Of the tempest near—and the sad Curlew
Join'd her discordant note, to make the scene
More terrible !—

Doge. Alas !

Val. Loud howl'd the blast ;
Darkness seem'd to veil the face of nature,
And nothing, save the white-capt billow,
Or the light-wing'd sea bird could be seen, when
Down upon the wave, it darted for its prey :—
Methought I was about to fly, when now,
A bark, I faint discern'd. I heard the seaman's cry ;

And a sudden impulse drove me to the shore,
 At mercy of the waves I saw the bark
 Now lift on high, now buried in the deep,
 A wave bore up an object to my view,
 And at the moment when the angry surf
 Had left the beach, I sprang to save the wretch :—
 It was my Foscari !—breathless and cold,
 I dragged him to the shore.

Doge. O, horrible !

But didst thou not awake at this ?

Val. Not yet—

For whilst I administer'd soft comfort
 To my reviving son, behold there rose
 A monster from the sea, of form terrific,
 And tore him from my arms—I shriek'd aloud,
 And by the exertions which I made, awoke.

Doge. Thy dream indeed, seems most portentous :
 Yet, do not let such fears disturb thy mind—
 Behold, our son is safely now in Venice,
 And soon I trust, we'll clasp him in our arms :
 Altho' some clouds have risen to obscure
 Our bliss, still, now I hope they will disperse,
 And yet our days may close in splendor.

Enter Servant.

Ser. My Lord, Count Erizzo waits without
 And demands in haste a private audience.

Val. Count Erizzo !

Ser. Yes—the Count, my Lady.

Val. I would as willingly a pestilence
 Had come within these walls, as that base man.

Doge. Return and bid Count Erizzo enter. [*Exit Ser.*]
 While tygers prowl about the fold, the shepherd
 Should not sleep—what can bring the Count this way !

Val. Through all my veins, I feel a death-like chill,
 And the sight of him would petrify me.
 I tremble when I see that horrid man—
 He carries on his brow the badge of vice,
 That narrow cheek, that keen but sunken eye,
 That black complexion, all denote the villain :
 His scowl is dreadful as the winter's blast,
 His hate is deadly—O beware the man ! [*Exit.*]

Doge. I know too well the hate he bears tow'rds me ;
His disappointed pride will never rest
But like to some angry midnight spectre,
Walk unappeas'd 'till glutted with revenge.

Enter ERIZZO, with a haughty air.

Eriz. My Lord !

Doge. Count Erizzo !

Eriz. I bring thee joyous news,
I come to announce thy son's arrival,

Doge. Indeed my Lord, I owe thee many thanks,
But, as the harbinger of such blest news
Thou com'st too late.

Eriz. Truly, that's my misfortune—
I hoped to have brought the news myself,
And to have witness'd all a parent's joy.

Doge. Thou dost me too much honor : too much I fear
To spring from either merit on my part,
Or on thine own regard—Proceed my Lord
Upon thy errand, which must doubtless be
On most weighty and important business.

Eriz. I cannot boast, 'tis true, much pow'r in Venice,
Nor pretend to hold great sway in council ;
But little as it is, I make thus bold
To lay it at thy feet, and beg, that thou
Would use it as thine own, if in behalf
Of thy most worthy son, it can avail
Thee aught.

Doge. But—first my Lord, to what account
Would'st thou this honor done me should be plac'd ?

Eriz. Place it Count Foscari to our friendship—
I hope our light political disputes
Have long e're this been buried in oblivion.
Once we were competitors in honor's list,
And when the blood of youth ran hot and high
Oppos'd each other with relentless hate ;
But thirty years have sure subdu'd our zeal,
Our love for worldly honor long has ceas'd,
And now we look more calmly on life's cares.

Doge. My hate was never so implacable,
However fix'd thine own.

Eriz. Truly my Lord,
The unparallel'd misfortunes of thy son,
The fall'n honor of thy house, the stain that—

Doge. Say not the fallen honor of my house,
For still I trust, unsullied stands my name :
The misfortunes of my son, my noble Lord,
Will ne'er be made to stigmatize my house,
And tho' his honor may at present be
Obscur'd by passing clouds of envy, yet
Will his innocence, I trust disperse them,
And leave his name untainted by reproach.

Eriz. To pass five years in exile, and under
Imputation, foul as that of murder
Is a reproach not wip'd away with ease.

Doge. Truly my Lord, I ne'er should seek thy aid
To vindicate my name, tho' blacker than thine own.

Eriz. So then, my Lord—I've rous'd thy indignation :
By hell, I'm glad to know thou hast some temper—
I've touch'd thee in a tender point, I find—

Doge. Hold, hold—thy pride becomes offensive—Count,
Thou dost forget thyself.

Eriz. Most bravely said—
Perhaps Erizzo may still more offend
When he demands to be inform'd the fate
Of lady Almeria.

Doge. Yes, signor—yes—
Thou shalt hear it—to thy shame shalt hear it—
'Twas no other than thyself who drove her
From the world—she hopes by close retirement
To avoid thy gross solicitations.

Eriz. Perdition seize thee, but thy words are false,
Base as thy views and narrow as thy heart—
Thou hast immur'd Almeria for thy son,
Purposing to prop thy tottering honor
By family alliance :—But thou shalt soon
Produce her to the world, or feel my wrath.

Doge. I disregard and laugh at all thy threats—
Thou art thyself more futile than a child.

Eriz. Count Foscari !—thou shalt repent that word—
Look to't my Lord—Look to't.

Doge. I'm well prepar'd

To bear the brunt of all thy wrath, commence
Thy warfare when it will—I'm now grown old
And weak in service of my country—but—
This arm is able to unsheath a sword
In preservation of my honor.

Eriz. Peace—peace—
Not all thy dignity, nor thy hoar-head
Shall screen thee from my vengeance.

Doge. I fear it not—

Eriz. I'll heap still greater curses on thy house,
And the stain that shall remain upon it,
Not all thy vaunted greatness shall remove.

Doge. But for the laws of hospitality,
My sword this instant should avenge this wrong.

Eriz. I'm griev'd that such an obstacle should leave
Thy anger unappeas'd.

Doge. Indeed my Lord,
I thought thee, once, possessing what the world
Call honor—but now, I find thee wanting even
That poor semblance of a virtue. (*Exit disdainfully.*)

Eriz. Ha! Ha!
I'm glad to find thee rous'd—'tis what I wish'd.
I've gain'd the end I wanted to attain—
Return'd!—young man, return'd unto thy tomb!
I must n't rest, else will the truth transpire,
And then, my honor's blasted—to work!—to work!
Almeria's the reward of all my labor.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An apartment in Count ERIZZO's Palace.*

COUNT solus.

CRIMES but contemplated more fearful seem,
And fill the mind with still far deeper dread,
Than ever they impart in perpetration.
One views them through the gloom of superstition,
And as a timid child who first beholds
It's shadow on the wall, starts back alarm'd—

'Then only let them serve to frighten fools!
 They are the offspring but of feeble minds,
 Which, like the flitting meteors of the night,
 Will vanish if approach'd and melt in air—
 'Tis now the noon of night, when hell sends forth
 It's ministers, to plot the fall of man.
 But speak!—who comes there?

Pol. Peace—'tis Policarpo.

Enter POLICARPO.

Eriz. I'm glad to see thee—thou com'st right aptly—
 Draw back that curtain—so—how goes the hour?

Pol. 'Tis drawing on tow'rds twelve.

Eriz. Make fast the door—

Good—give me thy hand—say—art thou dauntless?

Pol. What!—hast thou cause my Lord to doubt my
 faith?

Eriz. Who dare suspect the faith of Policarpo!—
 Yet—still—

Pol. Yet—still! dost thou doubt me?

Eriz. Nay, nay—

Yet there are deeds I'd say, that sturdiest minds
 Have trembled to perform, nay, e'en to think of.

Pol. Didst thou e'er know Policarpo tremble?

Eriz. Truly—should I say so, I'd do thee wrong—
 Never.

Pol. Never!

Eriz. Never at the cries of—

Pol. Never!

I like the cries of men, their groans accord
 Most aptly with my soul, and suit right well
 The tenor of my mind—whene'er I sleep,
 Athwart my mind, in fleeting visions pass,
 The shrouded forms of men, that point reproachful
 At their streaming wounds and shriek aloud despair!
 Eager I leap to quench my thirsty steel,
 When lo! I wake, and find it but a dream.

Eriz. Hold, hold—miscreant, hold! thou mak'st me
 tremble!

Have done with these thy childish phantasies—
 Thou hast been ever faithful to my views,

So take thy reward—And now to business.—

(*Giving him a Purse.*)

Our projects have succeeded all, as yet,
To the most ample gratification
Of our wishes:—yet one more scheme remains
To make my happiness complete.

Pol. Well—well—

Here's my stiletto, still at thy command—
Observe my lord—'tis bright and sharp as ever.

Eriz. Here too is my hand, open to supply
The wants of Policarpo.

Pol. Such a hand,

Can well repay the owner for his steel
That's worn away in thy long service, Count.

Eriz. I've tried thee long, and could unto thy faith
Confide my soul, so scruple not to trust
Within thy sacred charge, a deep secret
Which concerns me greatly.

Pol. Name it my Lord:

Gold is the key to almost any tongue. (*Aside.*)

Eriz. I never have disclos'd to man the cause
Which prompted me to wish Donato's death;
But now Policarpo, thou shalt hear it—
He had a daughter, whose angelic charms,
Bewitch'd my heart, and set my soul on fire:
O! she was fair, most beautifully fair!
And I with ardor, panted to possess her—
But, mark me now—I humbly sought her hand,
Which she most scornfully refused to give.
This was a blow Erizzo scarce could brook—
I woo'd her at her father's hand—e'en there
I fail'd—but there, by hell! my pride was touch'd,
I vow'd revenge—Well thou know'st, my vengeance
Was most amply satisf'd.

Pol. Ay—amply.

Thy indignation Count, was justly rous'd.

Eriz. But still the fire of my love increased,
And still the heavenly Almelia, seem'd
The tenfold dearer object of desire—
I yet persisted to make known my love,
Whenever opportunity occur'd;

But that was soon denied me, and no more
Was I admitted to her presence.

Pol. O!—

Insolent indeed!—But who prevented thee?

Eriz. My most inveterate enemy, the Doge.

Pol. And canst thou bear thus grossly to be wrong'd?

Eriz. Nay, hold! Thou shalt avenge me, even here—

Dost understand me—I presume?

Pol. Full well:

Much my stiletto likes Venetian blood!

But what more of Almeria?

Eriz. True, thou shalt learn—

She bore the shock of her fond father's death,

With painful, yet becoming fortitude;

But when she heard Foscari was impeach'd,

And sentenc'd, for the murder of the Count,

To waste his days in hopeless banishment,

She yielded up herself a prey to grief,

And now she mourns in some secluded place,

If credit may be given to the Doge's tale.

If then we may rely on what is told,

Let cunning interpose in our behalf,

And what we cannot gain by suasive means,

We will accomplish by the strength of nerve.

Be thou attentive, with a Lynx's eye,

Explore the haunt of this sequester'd maid.

Pol. Leave her to me—But now of Foscari!

Eriz. Perish his hopes, or be mine ever blasted!

The Council's now conven'd to try his guilt,

And, e'er the sun shall rise upon to-morrow,

His fate will be decided—There must thou be

To attest the truth of certain facts in point.

The Council is already well dispos'd

To punish with severity his crime;

And that same letter which he wrote the Duke,

(Doubtless in some unguarded moment penn'd)

May be constru'd as bearing on its face,

High treason 'gainst the State: I'll urge it home,

And if the voice of Count Erizzo's heard,

Perpetual banishment, or instant death,

Must certainly ensue.

Pol. The plan seems good—
 In this, we'll both find safety, thou, revenge.
Eriz. But hence—There's not a moment to be lost.
Pol. Dost thou go straight-ways to the council?
Eriz. Straight—
Pol. I'll be with thee?
Eriz. Right soon.
Pol. Shall come disguised?
Eriz. There's little need of that:—
 Thou art forever well enough disguis'd. (*Aside.*)
Pol. 'Tis well my Lord—proceed—I'll follow thee.
 (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II.—*The Senate-house.*

*The President of the Council of Ten, and other Counsellors
 seated in judgment. The Hall hung in black, and dimly
 illumined by a few tapers. A Prisoner in chains.
 Guards, &c.*

President. Apply the torture 'till each sinew crack,
 And wring the fatal secret from his lips,
 Unless this instant he confess the crime.
 Thy resolution slave, shall ne'er protect
 Nor save thee from the rigor of the laws—
 'Then, once for all, and in the name of Heav'n,
 We do conjure thee to confess thy crime.

Prisoner. Before a tribunal so corrupt as this,
 I'd scorn to speak, altho' I should escape
 The tortures which await me—Begin then
 Anew, ye miscreants, your horrid rites,
 Spin out my tortures, measure out my life,
 Stretch ev'ry sinew to unnerve the man—
 'Tis all in vain!—Ye shall not hear me groan,
 Altho' ye watch like Vultures over me,
 Until I breathe my last.

1st Coun. This is contempt!—(*Guards conduct him off.*)
 Away with him—hence!

Pres. Conduct him straightway
 To the wheel—Fathers, we must strive to sift
 This horrid deed, or who, among us all

Is safe?—Young Foscari must next be brought,
 Perchance his mind is humbled by misfortune,
 And subdu'd by absence from his country
 And his friends—Is Policarpo present?

Enter guards, with FOSCARI in chains.

Thou art charg'd before this high tribunal,
 Count Foscari, with gross infringement of the laws
 Of Venice, and for contempt of her decrees.
 When at a former time, in Heav'n's name
 We did conjure thee to declare thy crime,
 Thou didst persist to plead thy innocence,
 Despising all the tortures of the rack.

Fos. I do remember well, now, five years past,
 I here was charg'd with Count Donato's murder;
 And here, without the slightest colour of a proof,
 (Excepting that my servant named Oliver,
 Having by some accident, the evening
 Of that sad event, loitered near the palace
 Of the Count) endur'd your cruel tortures,
 Receiv'd your merciless sentence, the sentence
 Of perpetual banishment—I call on Heav'n
 Once more to witness, that I am innocent!

Pres. On Heaven!—O wicked blasphemous young
 man!

And can'st thou, Count, presume to call on Heav'n,
 Seeing that thou bid'st defiance to its laws?

Fos. Then hear me Heav'n as I hope for mercy,
 I'm innocent of Count Donato's murder!

Pres. But now we are not met to try thy guilt,
 As to Count Donato's murder—That fact
 Already stands too well establish'd—then hear
 Thy charge. This letter will explain th' extent
 And magnitude of thy offence—be't read.

(Giving a letter to the SECRETARY.)

Enter ERRIZO and POLICARPO, at different doors.

1st Coun. Here's Policarpo—let him first be heard.
 Thou art commanded to declare from whom
 Thou didst receive that letter—come forward.

Pol. I did receive it from Count Foscari,
 With promises of ample recompense—

Pres. If thou should convey it unto the Duke Of Milan.—

Pol. That was the stipulation.

Pres. But thou hast acted as becometh well,
A good and faithful citizen of Venice.
Receive then the thanks of all this Council.

Eriz. I'll put one question with your leave my Lords—
Where wert thou Policarpo, at the time
Thou didst receive that letter?

Pol. At the island of Candia, my Lord,
Where I have been long concern'd in merchandize.

Eriz. Enough, produce the letter, let it be read.

(*Secretary reads.*)

TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF MILAN.

Dated at Cania in the Island of Candia,

Most gracious Prince,

He who now presumes to address you, is the only son of Count Foscari, Döge of Venice. Ere this, no doubt, the tale of my unhappy fate has reached you. Suffer me then to implore you, by all that is sacred to exert your influence with my country, and to snatch me from a death, the most undeserved and cruel.

I must conclude thus abruptly, yet compassionate the most wretched the most miserable of mankind.

(Signed,)

FOSCARI.

Pres. This is the crime of which thou stand'st accus'd,
And 'tis to answer this, that thou art hither
Brought in chains; for know, 'tis offence young man,
Most high, for any citizen of Venice,
To claim protection of a foreign prince.
It then Count Foscari remains with thee,
Either that thou confess or do disprove
Thyself to be the author of that letter.

Fos. My mind was never train'd most noble fathers,
To tread the paths of low device or cunning:
Bred from my infancy to pant for fame,
I early learnt to place my views so high,
As to contemn those little grov'ling arts
Of mean equivocation and deceit,
Which men oft use to screen themselves from shame.

I will therefore most candidly confess,
 That I did write that letter to the Duke.
 The wretch in whom I did repose the trust,
 In whom 'twould seem as tho' I did confide
 So far, stamp'd with the marks of villany
 And bearing in his dark and fallen front
 The hideous type of base depravity,
 Was studiously selected from the herd
 To be its bearer to these very shores.
 I knew full well, that Venice, by her laws
 Had made my deed a capital offence,
 But as I felt the warmth of filial love,
 More highly rise beyond each other sense,
 I could not dare suppress its sacred flame,
 But in the transport of my grief, did write
 The Duke, craving his interposition—
 And yet, I wish'd not that he'd favor grant,
 But only hop'd once more to be recall'd:
 I knew the hateful Policarpo well,
 And long foresaw that this would prove th' event.

Eriz. This is enough—he hath confess'd his guilt,
 And even glories in the unlawful deed.
 He thinks, beneath his filial piety
 To screen himself from justice; but our laws,
 Thank Heav'n! are not thus easily evaded:
 Our province only is to fix the guilt
 Upon the offender's head, our country
 Hath prescrib'd the punishment already:
 As well might we attempt to move the spheres,
 As change the laws of Venice.—'Tis better
 That our laws should be too harsh constructed,
 Than by their seeming lenity, to lead
 To infamy and crime.

Fos. O Heav'n avenge me!—
 In vain hereafter wilt thou lift thy voice
 When thou shalt cry for mercy from above;
 For then, no Mediator shalt thou find
 To sue for thee, with an offended God—
 I call on thee, fair nature to disclaim
 This monster as thy offspring—yes—monster—
 Monster, too foul for e'en the damning curse

Of Heav'n to overwhelm with vengeance.

Pres. Hold!

What outrage wilt thou next presume to make
Upon a member of this high tribunal?

Fos. I will have done, so humbly crave thy pardon--
The lion would have crush'd the grov'ling worm
That unprovok'd, dar'd to inflict a sting,
But 'twas too mean an object for his wrath.

Pres. Thy stubbornness young man, hath long been
known,

And mark'd full well by this august tribunal.
It grieves me to behold thee thus mark'd out
A melancholy victim to the law,
Which now condemns thee unto banishment
Perpetual to the isle of Candia.
For one whole year, in close imprisonment
In solitary darkness to remain;
There to reflect upon thy crimes in private,
And crave forgiveness at the shrine of Heav'n--
But beware a second violation
Of the laws, I warn thee as a father;
For shouldst thou still incorrigible prove,
And dare a second violation make,
Thou art forever doom'd to linger out
Thy days within thy prisons darkest cells.

Fos. The torments of the rack I'd bear resign'd,
I'd even suffer death without a groan,
But do not force me thus from all I love,
Reverse my fate--'tis insupportable.

Pres. The Doge thy father, and his virtuous wife
Thy mother, shall receive at stated times,
The senate's passport unto Candia's shores,
To mitigate the rigor of thy fate.

Fos. Reverse your judgment fathers, and ward off
That hateful stain, that will on Venice fall.

Pres. Murmur not young man—it is impossible.

Fos. Then be your infamy, your own reward:
For when in after times, your harsh decree—
Shall pass revisal by more noble minds,
Venice shall blush to hear your names recall'd,
And Foscari's shall stand absolv'd from guilt—

For sure the time will come, when vice must drop
The mask of virtue she's assum'd, and in
Her own, her hideous shape, appear to view.

Pres. Thy railing youth, but ill becometh thee—
This instant then conduct him to his prison,
And as the breeze may favor his departure,
Be our decree most rigidly fulfill'd.

Fos. Then may the pealing thunder of despair
Burst o'er your heads, and leave you naught to hope !
So, when the day of retribution comes,
When earth shall roll before the court of Heav'n,
You all may know that same despair, which fills
My soul with anguish. *(Exit with guards.)*

Pres. Hence—begone with him !
We'll bear no more his pride and insolence ;
He gives too wanton freedom to his tongue,
It needs severity to curb it—but
Hark !—who comes this way ?

Eriz. Ha !—'tis the Doge !

Enter DOGE and LADY VALERIA, VALERIA veiled.

Doge. Pardon I pray my Lords, this bold intrusion ;
It is the dictate of a father's warmth,
And doubtless flows from over anxious zeal
To vindicate the honor of his child.
At the bar of this most sacred council
For mercy I presume, this night to seek ;
My sanguine hopes I trust, will not be blasted
As I for mercy to my country fly.
These silver'd locks, support my claims upon her,
For in her service thy are all I've gain'd.

Pres. Justice only can our laws dispense, mercy
We leave for weaker councils to display.

Doge. Fathers, I come to plead in the behalf,
Of my innocent, but unhappy son.

Pres. The fate of thy unhappy son is fix'd,
Nor could we e'en for justice sake reverse it.

VALERIA throwing off her veil suddenly.

Val. The fatal sentence is pronounc'd, and death
Is the portion of my child !—O mercy !
Mercy fathers !—for the sake of Heav'n,

Spare me !—let me not hear the dread decree,
In secret let the fatal blow be giv'n !

Pres. Most noble Lady, pray you be compos'd,
Much we regret the sentence we decree.

Val. Then let me not hear it !—'tis death—'tis death !—
Here, on my knees, I throw myself before you,
I crave your pity in the name of Heav'n !
O listen to the supplicating cries
Of a distracted mother !—Behold her
At this sacred shrine, imploring mercy,
Mercy, as ye hope for mercy of your God !—
I call on Count Donato's shade—invoke
The long departed spirit of the dead,
Bid it stalk forth in horrible array,
'To vindicate the honor of my child !
Yes—let the guilty tremble, for heaven
Will avenge this wrong.

Eriz. Pardon, my lady !—
But such language suits not this tribunal.

Val. Perhaps it suits not Count Erizzo's temper ;
But should the dead arise, thou need'st not tremble :
The fingers surely would not point at thee !

Eriz. What !—Would'st thou cast on me such foul
reproach ?

Val. Nay, nay, my lord ; thou dost reproach thyself :
'The cleanliest hand doth oft'ner wear the glove,
And where base men, no bold accusers find,
Their own suspicions oft betray themselves.

Pres. Lady, no more ; the laws must be fulfill'd—
Then all thy supplications are in vain.

Val. I bow with due submission, to the laws ;
So, be it as thou say'st—I'm silent !

Doge. But, shall we not behold our son once more ;
E're he be taken from our sight forev'r ?

Pres. Within his prison's cell, he rests, until
A favoring gale shall waft him from our shores.

Doge. Then grant I intreat my lord, those few short
hours,

In tender converse with our child, until
The moment shall arrive, when we must part.

Pres. This, thy petition, Doge, is granted thee,

In recollection of thy high respect :
 But remember this, the stipulation ;
 We look to thee for his safe custody :—
 Thy life must answer for his prompt return—
 Remember !

Doge. Be it so, my lord.---Come---come.---

(Exeunt DOGE and VALERIA.)

(ERIZZO casts a malignant eye upon them as they pass.)

Eriz. But, now let Policarpo be rewarded
 For his important service to the State ;
 Doubtless he lodged the information here.

Pol. I thrust the letter in the lion's mouth
 With my own hands ; and lest there should be doubt
 That I inform'd the council, I was careful
 To retain this certain proof.---Compare it
 With the letter.

(POLICARPO takes a scrap of paper from an old pouch, and presents it to the SECRETARY.)

Secretary. It coincides my lord,
 And fits right aptly with the sheat.

Pres. 'Tis well—

Then from the coffers of the State, reward
 Him as his services deserve.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—A Prison.

FOSCARI alone.

A dread and deathlike silence, oft foretels
 The approach of distant storms, and nature, ere
 She's shook by her convulsive throes,
 Doth veil herself in clouds.---
 O, what an awful moment of suspense
 Is that which separates us from our bliss !—
 With firmness we resist the ruder shocks,
 Which harass and perplex the life of man

And our fortitude forsakes us only
 When, those misfortunes which we dread to meet,
 Are just about to vanish.—But, alas!
 Can the mere thought of meeting whom we love,
 Distract the senses and unnerve the soul?—
 Yes; my adorable Almeria; yes—
 At thought of thee, my blood more quickly ebbs,
 And flows—But hold! Almeria did I say?
 Almeria hath forgot this heart still beats,
 And long ere this, her smiles have been bestow'd
 Upon some object, who deserves them more
 Than e'er the persecuted Foscari!—
 But hark!—My father's footsteps!—Assist me
 Heav'n to support this conflict of delight!

(Enter OFFICER, accompanied by GOMEZ.)

Where is my father?—Let me behold my father!

Officer. Signor, prepare thyself for his approach—
 His frame can ill support the interview,
 Unless thou meet him with a manly air,
 And with becoming fortitude.

Foscari. Cease—cease—

Nor speak to me I pray, of fortitude.—
 As well might'st thou apply the lighted match,
 And bid the sulphurous mine burn tamely.

Officer. Let me conjure thee, by thy filial love,
 Restrain thy feelings ere thou meet the Doge.

Fos. Do not thus tamper with me, but let me
 Behold my father. *(Attempting to leave the Prison.)*

GOMEZ at the Door.

Signor, stand back there.

Fos. Give way—nor dare resist me, villain.

Gom. Thou must not pass without these walls, my lord.
(Laying hold of him.)

Fos. Perdition seize thee! unhand me ruffian,
 Unhand me, or I'll tear thee limb from limb!

(Breaking from him, but starting back suddenly)
 O! my father!

DOGE without.

Can this weak frame then bear me to my son,
 Once more before these eyes are clos'd forever?

Enter DOGE.

Do I behold my long lost son, again ?

The only prop of my declining age !

Fos. O, let me cling about thee !—Let me kiss

Those aged feet that bear thee to thy son.

(Embracing his father.)

Doge. This is too much for nature to support !

Thou hast unman'd me !---

Fos. My dearest father,

Do I then hold thee in these arms once more ?

Do my lips press again thy aged cheek ?

Do I hear again that dear, that tender voice ?

O ! speak, my Father,---Speak to me !

Doge. My son,

My soul is faint and overcome with grief ;—

What can I say of comfort to my child ?

Fos. Do I behold those eyes o'erflow with tears,

And find, unmov'd, no moisture from my own ?

Alas ! the tears that once could overflow,

And gush like fountains from these eyes, are now

Grown dry, and cease to spring at sorrow's call.

Doge. Thou wilt have greater need my son, for tears,

When thy fond mother's arms are open wide

To clasp thee to her bosom : For trust me

She looks with tenfold greater anxiousness

Tow'rds the approach of that blest moment,

Than e'er she did, towards thy natal day.

Fos. Then bear me to her on the wings of speed,

Let my light steps not touch the earth

Until I throw me at my parent's feet !

Doge. But, still my son, thou must with caution meet

Thy mother. Her gentle nature cannot

Support too great extreme of joy or grief.

Then, sum up all thy fortitude, call up

Whate'er thou hast of man, within thy soul,

Prepare it to support the sharpest pangs

That e'er thy nature suffer'd.

Fos. My mother!

Ah !—sure thy gentle nature can ill support

Itself amidst the horrors of this cell !

Doge. I have obtain'd permission of the council,
So thou wilt be conducted to our palace,
Myself the pledge of thy safe custody.

Fos. And there to behold my lov'd Almeria?
My anxious soul's devour'd with suspense—
O, what are not my bodings!—Look not thus,
Upon me, but loose me from the rack, say,
I beseech thee speak—Almeria—doth she live?

Doge. Do not alarm thyself, but be resign'd.

Fos. Distraction! then nothing have I to hope!

Doge. Fear not for thy Almeria lives.

Fos. Thank Heav'n!

Blest be those lips that spake those words!

Doge. Ah! —yes—

She lives, but in a lone retreat, she pines
Away her days, and far from ev'ry eye,
Pours out her grief in private.

Fos. Then tell me,

Where shall I find her?—where shall I seek
Her solitary seat, to vent anew
My rapturous vows, and still confess myself
Her slave. For tho' these ignominious chains
Disgrace thy son, soon shall he stand, I trust,
Absolv'd from crime, and worthy of Almeria—
Yet explain this mystery I pray thee,
Wherefore doth she shut herself from all the world?
Why not within the bosom of her friends
Look for that comfort which the world denies?

Doge. Thou soon shalt be inform'd—Count Erizzo
Is thy most deadly enemy!

For the present, ask no further of me.

Fos. I know too well, he owes me deadly hate.

Doge. And therefore, he persecutes Almeria.

Fos. Base and malignant fiend! where shall she hide
From thy infernal arts!—what dark recess
Will not thy cunning pierce!—O, were I free,
Free from these bonds, which so disgrace my name,
This instant would I fly to comfort her,
And clasping her within my arms, defy
His malice, and laugh to scorn his power.

Doge. But come, thy mother with impatience waits

Thy presence—let 's lose no time in meeting her;
Whate'er appears mysterious to thee now,
Shall be unfolded in due time.

Fos. Lead on,

My father—I will follow thee. (*Going.*)

Gomez. (*at the door.*) Stand back

My Lord, thy son cannot pass out with thee;

He 's a state prisoner, and cannot go,

Without the permission of the council.

Doge. I have permission of the council friend,
Or hence, should not attempt to lead my son.

Gom. Produce it.

Fos. Villain! dost thou doubt the word?

Doge. Hold!—The mandoth well—read thou this paper,

(*Giving a paper to Gomez.*)

He understands his duty—'tis his part
To doubt.

[*Exeunt.*

(*A pause.*)

Gom. So---so—'tis well—pass on—pass on.

'Tis good Foscari—you've escap'd me now:

But curse me, if ever I forget thee!

Thy lordly-spirit ill befits a prisoner,

And suits still less, one of thy bloody stamp.

Rash boy! revenge most surely shall o'ertake thee,

In deadliest shape my passion can contrive!

For yet I trust, I'll have thee in my power—

I'll ransack ev'ry corner of my brain

But I'll effect thy ruin—Thou wilt not be

The only one, who 's fallen by my hand—

Revenge like mine, will sure be sweet indeed,

E'en Hell shall envy my inventive mind!

But who comes this way, to disturb my thoughts!

Enter POLICARPO.

Pol. Ha! Gomez, thy hand—how fares it with thee?

Gom. Badly enough, badly enough my friend.

Pol. Why, what 's the matter? Has the world grown
honest,

And thou in fear of starving for employ?

Gom. I'll turn confessor when that time shall come,

And teach the world its villany again.

But enough—I've no time for prating:—

When boys assume the airs of men, 'tis time
For men to put on swaddling bands—attend,
What passage didst thou enter at just now?

Pol. I enter'd at the gate that fronts the north.

Gom. Did no one pass the arch-way as thou enter'dst?

Pol. Count Foscari, and the Doge his father past:
I hid me in a nitch 'till they went by.
But, how goes he unattended by a guard?
State prisoners are not wont to go at large.

Gom. Thou se'st how 'tis my friend: more honest men,
For instance, e'en thyself or me, might here
Lie down and rot, but, noble men, forsooth
Are any time entitled to court favors—
I hate to think on 't, my blood boils within me.

Pol. This comes of birth distinctions in a state,
And so—

Gom. And so, by Hell!—I'll be reveng'd:
A blow from e'en a lord, sits not more light,
Than one from e'en the meanest peasant hind.

Pol. A blow!—how now my friend? what dost thou mean?

Gom. Why, to be brief, I've just receiv'd a blow
From that rude fellow who past out just now.

Pol. Indeed!—From Count Foscari I presume—
I know him well, I know his hasty spirit.

Gom. The same—but I'm resolv'd to find revenge.

Pol. Revenge! trust me my friend, it is a jewel,
Which seldom is attain'd, unless dug up
With golden spades: poor men should rest content
To use the spade in service of the rich:
The willing hand may seldom need employ.

Gom. I understand thee Policarpo—Well,
Inlist me then, and I'll dig up the mine;
I'll turn up e'en the very hugest mound,
To find this precious gem: I'll labor hard,
Although it should adorn another's brow:
This once I'll find it, should I lose my soul!

Pol. Give me thy hand—thou art the very man:
Thou shalt have revenge to thy heart's content.

Gom. Then thou canst lead to the desired end?

Pol. Direct as e'er thy dagger to a heart— (*A groan.*)
But hark!

Gom. What?

Pol. Hear'dst thou not a groan just now?
It came methought from the adjoining dungeon.

Gom. True, true, 'twas the groan of one Oliver,
A former footman of this haughty Count;
He's here condemn'd to linger out his life:
A proof more certain than mere vague suspicion,
Would have condemn'd him, and his master too
To instant and to public death—But cease,
We're overheard—There's some one at our heels:
We will have more of this, next time we meet.

Pol. Ha!—'tis the very man I wish'd to find,
'Tis Count Erizzo—withdraw—withdraw.
Anon I'll meet thee—then we'll further speak
Upon this subject, and arrange our plans.

Gom. Ay—be it so—thou shalt find me within.

[*Exit GOMEZ, as ERIZZO enters at another door.*]

Eriz. I heard a voice—who was't speaking with thee?

Pol. A most faithful and deserving fellow,
Gomez by name,—a man after my own heart.

Eriz. I'm glad to hear thou hast a fellow:
I had some fears, lest thou should stand unequal'd.

Pol. But listen—I have news will fit thine ear.

Eriz. Is't of Almeria? I'm all attention.

Pol. 'Tis news that leads that way—let me be brief.

On coming here, I found my worthy friend,
Black as thunder cloud, when fully charg'd
To vent its fury on the earth. I found
High indignation rankling in his breast;
I strove to make his discontent more fierce,
So seem'd myself more happy than I am:
I knew 't would gall him sore, and spur him on
To perpetrate the deadliest deed on earth.

Eriz. But, wherefore was his anger rais'd so high?

Pol. I had no time to learn particulars,
For thy approach allarm'd us.

Eriz. Unfortunate!

Pol. But, I've enough to answer our ends.
His indignation was 'gainst Foscari—
And he's resolv'd to be reveng'd.

Eriz. The means?

Pol. He ne'er shall want the means, believe me Count,
It rests with me. His lecture has been heard—
Thou may'st imagine the reward thyself,
A man of honor pays, when he receives
A Blow. (*ironically.*)

Eriz. So so—now I understand thee—
Then Policarpo, look to it thyself:
We are bad fowlers if the bird escape,
When so many snares are laid.

Pol. True my Lord!
But I've lim'd many old birds in my time,
So need not fear the cunning of the young.
Eriz. But hast thou of Almeria, yet no news?
Thou said'st just now thy story led that way.
Pol. Meet me at Saint Marks at four—come disguised:
But do not leave thy rapier at home.

Eriz. What now?—and will there be need of rapiers?

Pol. Nay—I hope not!

Eriz. Disguised!—and armed! thou say'st?

Pol. Ay—just so.

Eriz. But wherefore?—first inform me.

Pol. I've business on my hands—ask me no more.
I must obtain a trusty friend—Gomez,
In this affair, shall answer as our tool—
Meet me at four—Almeria's thy reward.
Remember! [Exit.

Eriz. (*after a pause.*) See where the ruffian skulks along,
And mark how eagerly he pants for blood!
I've listen'd oftentimes to the hungry wolf,
When neighboring caves have answer'd to her cries,
And echoing woods return'd the lengthen'd yell;
Still, her sad howl ne'er seem'd so terrible,
As the detested voice of that fell villain:
Yet, he doth well besit my purpose, and suits
The work, I hold thus dearly to my soul.
'Tis galling to be sure to hug this fiend so close,
Yet the moment is I hope arriving,
When I may cast this hateful burden off,
And free myself from such degrading bondage—
Yes—I will meet thee Policarpo—Ay—
'Though Hell should yawn, and stare me in the face!

But, when the work is done---then look to it---
We then, will settle our accounts in full.

(*Exit.*)

ACT IV.

SCENE I—*Bower.*

Enter ERIZZO and POLICARPO, disguised.

Pol. This is the place—tread lightly.

Eriz. Art thou sure?

Pol. I know it well.

Eriz. But 'tis an ill tim'd hour

O' the morning to meet her in her walks.

Pol. No, not at all—she's what they call romantic.

Soft—soft—come this way---didst thou hear nothing?

Eriz. Nothing.

It was nothing but my rapier that fell.—

Where's Gomez?

Pol. He waits without, with a Gondola.

Eriz. Let's lurk beneath the gloom of yonder elms:

There 'tis dark enough for any deed.

Pol. Soft!—Tread light my lord, lest we be over-
heard.

(*Excunt.*)

Enter FOSCARI.

Fos. Why wilt thou, memory, distract my brain,
And sting me with the curse of what I am,
By thus reminding me of what I was!—
Full six long years have past, since 'neath these shades
Almeria listen'd to my tale of love.
I do remember the blest evening well:
We stroll'd together from our youthful friends,
And this appear'd the choice, propitious spot,
Which tempted me to open all my soul:—
Amid these groves, we oft have sat and read,
And often have I seen her cheek bedew'd
With tears, as her soft eyes have past the page
Of e'en fictitious woe.—Shall that cheek then
Which glow'd with sympathy at stranger's ills,

Which flow'd with tears at artificial woe,
 Be only dry, when it should stream for me ?
 But hush—some foot treads light among the leaves ;
 Sure 'tis Almeria !—No, I am deceiv'd ;
 'Tis nothing but the breeze which gently stirs
 The branches.—See—here her fair hand hath grav'd
 Th' initials of her name ; and here, behold,
 Is carv'd at length, the name of her Foscari !

(He seems deeply engaged in pondering upon the name which is carved upon the tree, while ALMERIA enters slowly, looking at a Miniature.)

Alm. Ah ! what benignity, what tenderness
 Are seated on this brow !—What melting eyes !
 What sweet, expressive lips !—The artist's mind
 Might here have dwelt, as on consummate good !
 What unity pervades the whole !—How mild !
 Yet, how resistless !—Altho' on his tongue
 Persuasion dwelt, a noble dignity
 Made conquest sure !—A smile like morning's blush,
 Glad'ning the heart, and bidding sorrow fly !
 Can features mild as these depict a base
 Degen'rate villain ? No, 'tis impossible !—
 Yet, hath not Venice stamp't him with the crime ?
 Doth he not now, in some far foreign land
 Atone to Heav'n for the bloody deed ?
 Yet, tho' true, alas ! this valu'd relict,
 Still pleads in his behalf, and bids me hope
 That Foscari may yet be innocent !—
 O ! could I but behold that face again !
 But press unto my soul !—Ha—a stranger !

Fos. By Heav'n, 'tis she ! It is Almeria !

(Coming forward.)

Alm. Yes—that voice seems right familiar to me ;
 But thy features are unknown.

Fos. Then, lady—

Have five short years so greatly chang'd them ?

Alm. Thy voice reminds me of a friend, the dearest
 That this heart ever knew.—O, speak ! whence art thou ?
 What is thy errand ?

Fos. O ! this is too much !

Alm. I beseech thee, speak !

Fos. My errand is with thee,
Lady Almeria.—Dost thou not know me ?

Alm. It cannot be—surely my eyes deceive me !
First then let me ponder on thy countenance.—
Gracious Heav'n ! it is my Foscari !

(Throwing herself into his arms.)

FOSCARI looking eagerly at the Miniature.

Fos. Ha !—

What do I behold ? that same miniature,
Which, as the pledge of my eternal love,
I gave her.—Thanks to Heav'n, she loves me still !

Alm. Isn't this the dream of a distemper'd mind ?

Fos. O, no—'tis no dream—'tis all reality ;
'Tis thy Foscari who supports thee—
The same Foscari, who beneath thy fond,
Paternal roof, thou blessed'st with thy love.
A dream—no, 'tis all reality.

Alm. Hold—

Loose, loose me from thy serpent folds—stand off.

(Breaking from his arms.)

Fos. And is this the language of Almeria ?

Alm. Avaunt ! avaunt ! thou parricide !

Fos. O ! Almeria,
Spare me but that pang, I do conjure thee,
For the love of mercy !—

Alm. This instant leave me !
If ever thou didst love Almeria—leave her.

Fos. Behold me, Almeria, prostrate at thy feet !
Let me implore thee, by all that's sacred,
Hear me.

Alm. My father heard thee, wretch ! and perish'd.

Fos. Can the sweet lips of the ador'd Almeria,
Speak such daggers to my soul ?

Alm. Insolent !
Degen'rate ! unparrall'd assassin !
It sure cannot be criminal, to speak
What thou couldst use against my father's life !

Fos. By Heav'n, Almeria, I am innocent ;
By all that's sacred, thou dost wrong me.

I swear, by thy lov'd self, I'm innocent !

Alm. Thou art a blight, that witherest all before thee :
Thou art nature's master-work of villany.

Fos. Be not more rigid than the laws ; be just,
And Oh ! be merciful !---First hear me speak.

Alm. What !---Shall I hear thee plead thy innocence,
When thine own country hath announc'd thy guilt ?

Fos. O, name it not ! my soul sickens at the sound.
No---I can no longer bear the horrid
Imputation of a murderer---no,
Almeria, sooner than I would have shed
Thy father's blood, sooner than have wrung thy heart
By such a deed, I would have thrust this arm
Into the blaze, nor mov'd, nor groan'd, until
The very marrow were consum'd to ashes.

Alm. This satisfies me only of thy art---
Believe me, Foscari, I still must doubt,
Altho' my heart pleads loud in thy behalf.

Fos. Whenever justice can maintain a doubt,
Let mercy interpose her voice.

Alm. I pity thee !
Yes---from my very soul, I pity thee !
That pity makes me wish thou wert not guilty.
Fos. Yet, yet remember, how from infancy,
With fond, fraternal tenderness, I lov'd thee :---
Ever hast thou been the mistress of my soul,
And kept the dearest secrets of my heart---
Then, my Almeria, I conjure thee say,
Didst thou e'er know me sway'd by cruelty,
Or practising those arts of treachery,
Which mark with subtle line the villain's trait ?
Didst thou e'er know me condescend to deeds,
That the least could blacken or disgrace my name ?
Or hast thou yet perceiv'd that in this breast,
Feelings of malice or revenge e'er rankled,
That now thou should'st thus easily believe
Each deadly crime concentrated in me ?
O ! thou sure could'st ne'er have lov'd---by Heav'n, no !
Else thou could'st not such easy credence yield,
To calumny so foul, so base, against
My honor ?

Alm. Not to believe thee guilty,
Were in this, to participate thy guilt.

Fos. O give me thy hand ! I will not let thee go
Until thou shalt pronounce me innocent.

Alm. Once I beheld thee as the noble Foscari,
The honor and the glory of thy house :
But alas ! how is thy nature fallen !
Do not contaminate me by thy touch,
Thy hands still reeking with my father's blood !
Thou wilt beguile my soul—begone—begone !
Thou wilt defile me, making me more black
Than e'en thou art—O thou wilt drive me mad !

Fos. Already hath thy cruelty, far more
Than driv'n me mad—I rave !—my brain will burst.
Behold ! I lie before thee like a worm,
Trample me—destroy me—crush me into dust—
But do not---do not thus insult my woes !

Alm. Could'st thou then e'er believe my heart so base,
As to insult thy woes ?---Almeria's soul
Disdains so mean a triumph.
I once lov'd thee---in my soul I lov'd thee,
But, alas !---I little dreamt I cherish'd
In my breast, the most invenom'd viper !

Fos. Ungenerous ! unfeeling Almeria !
Thou may'st be satisfi'd perhaps too late,
That I am innocent.

Alm. Impossible !
Too much I fear it is impossible !

Fos. O, could I open unto thee my heart,
Dissect each little nerve, and lay my soul
As on a map before thee, Almeria
Then would see, how grossly she doth wrong me,
She'd see, that sooner than inflict one pang
Upon that gentle heart, I would endure
Forever, all the tortures of the damn'd !

Alm. Thou know'st the way unto my soul too well ;
Thou hast wound my feelings up to phrensy :
The hand of madness hath already seiz'd me :
O Foscari !—whither would'st thou lead me ?

Fos. I'd lead thee to be merciful !

Alm. Alas !

If thou could teach that virtue—thou would'st leave me.

(A pause.)

Fos. Then lady---farewell!—eternally farewell!
Remember that the friendless Foscari
Now takes his leave forever!—yes Almeria
Thou shalt remember me when 'tis too late.
With much danger I've obtain'd this interview,
Only to bless these eyes with sight of thee,
Before I bade thee an adieu forever—
So now, I take my leave—remember me!
When in a foreign land, outcast from love,
From friendship and from thee, in wretchedness,
I shrink within my miserable cell,
When death's cold hand shall settle on this brow,
And these pale lips, that now implore thy mercy,
In death, forever, shall be clos'd and cold,
Then shalt thou wish, that thou could stretch thy hand
To soothe the agonies of Foscari.

Alm. Mercy!—have mercy on me Foscari,
I can hear no more—O let me fly thee! *[Exit.]*

(A pause.)

Fos. Then indeed hath fortune done her worst!
I now grow frantic by her cruel stings!
'Till this, I thought I could defy her shafts,
But now she proves the victor over me.
Almeria hath suppli'd the dart, that thus
Undoes me—O happy shores of Candia!
Ye know not such barbarians as Almeria!
Then unto you will Foscari return,
And in thy hospitable wilds, will breathe
His last. *(Shrieks without.)*
But hark!—it is Almeria's voice.

Enter ALMERIA, pursued.

Alm. Help! help!—save me!

Fos. Yes—at the risk of life—
Here—take refuge here, and I'll protect thee.

Enter POLICARPO and ERIZZO in pursuit of ALMERIA.

Pol. By hell, she shan't escape—seize her,

Fos. Stand off!

If thou approach one step, that step's thy last.

Eriz. Villain.

Stand back—or I'll crush thee into atoms!

Fos. Infamous assassin!—base born coward
Begone.

Eriz. Tear her from his arms this instant,
Dost thou dare resist me!

*ERIZZO makes a blow at FOSCARI, with his rapier, but the
latter arrests his arm, they struggle.*

Pol. This to thy heart! (*Stabs ERIZZO through accident.*)

Eriz. O hell and distraction blast the villain!
Desist base miscreant! for thou hast slain me.

ERIZZO strikes furiously at POLICARPO. They fight.

Fos. Now Almeria, let us fly this instant,
This—this is our moment for escape. *Exeunt.*

Eriz. Wretch, wretch! thou hast slain me!

Pol. It was not meant
For thee my lord, but for the breast of him
Who struggled with thee.

Eriz. Perdition seize thee!
I'll tear thy heart out—mine flows from my wound.
O Policarpo! I die—lead me hence.

Pol. What! lead thee hence to tell thy death bed tales?
But first, take that, and that (*stabs him.*) Policarpo
Is too wise for such a snare!

ERIZZO falls, exit POLICARPO.

Eriz. O, I am slain!
Murder, murder! in the the name of Heav'n help!

Enter several Fishermen.

1st Fish. This way, this way—the cries came from this
way.

Eriz. Hither, hither! lend me your help—I'm dying.

2d Fish. See, by the mass! here's blood. Speak, who
are you?

Eriz. I am Count Erizzo.

3d Fish. But what's your misfortune?

Good saints! the poor gentleman is dying!

Eriz. I've not a moment's life to spare, so first
Pursue the villain who hath done this deed:

He lurks beneath the covert of the wood,
(Several Fishermen are dispatched in pursuit of POLICARPO.)

The blood fast gushes from my wounds, and now
 My only wish is to behold the Doge,
 This instant fly—fly ere it be too late :

Tell him, I have much to inform him of his son,
 Tell him I will point out the horrid wretch
 Who murder'd Count Donato—haste thee then,
 For I have a secret of high import

To communicate: *(Exit first Fisherman.)*

3d Fish. Haste thee Pedro--haste--

Eriz. Hell opens wide its jaws to swallow me !

2d Fish. Let's take him to our hut.

Eriz. Pray lead me hence !

You must support me—I'm too weak to walk.

Take me in your arms—soft—ye tear my vitals.

(They assist him to rise.)

Distraction !—O gently !—gently !

3d Fish. Look, look !

They have the villain—see there, how they drag

Him along the by-path, tow'rd's our cabin,

There, there—don't you see them amidst the gloom.

2d Fish. And now just mark, what resistance he makes !
 See, see--there's some one to his assistance.

3d Fisher. Now they overpow'r and lead him off.

Eriz. Gently, gently—lead me on ere I die—

Then they have the villain, and lead him hence ?

Say'd you not so ?

3d Fish. We did—they have them bound.

Eriz. Then will the pangs of death lose half their sting.

O, could I but see him writhe in agony,

But witness his despairing shrieks and groans.

Then !—O then !

(Faints in their arms.)

2d Fish. Good saints protect us !

3d Fish. He faints,

Haste—let's take him hence ! the poor gentleman

I fear is dead—haste—haste !

(They bear him off.)

ACT V.

SCENE.

An apartment in the DOGE's palace, FOSCARI leaning on his father's bosom.

Fos. Unhappy miserable Foscari !

Doge. Thy innocence will yet blaze forth my son,
And add a tenfold lustre to thy name :
The dawn that's overcast, doth oftentimes
Precede the most resplendent noon, and oft
We see the sun, bright glitter in the East,
Rejoicing as 'twere in youthful splendor,
But ere 'tis noon, his brightness is o'ercast,
Or, ere he sinks into the western world,
Is wrapt in thick, impenetrable gloom.

Fos. I am a wretch indeed, mark'd out by fate,
The sport, the jest of her malignant stings.

Doge. Assume a Spartan pride, and if there flow
One drop of noble blood within thy veins,
Evince thyself deserving of thy name.

Fos. Lead me to the cannon's mouth, let danger
Meet me front to front, let the voice of war
Proclaim with fearful blast th' approach of death,
Dauntless I'd meet the danger of the field,
And ward dishonor from Foscari's name :
But my impetuous soul, cannot support
Protracted woe—it shrinks with horror back,
As man recoils from the fell serpent's sting.

Doge. Vain glory prompts the hero to the field :
Boldly he leads his thousands on the sword,
And wades through blood, to find an empty name ;
He fights to gain the wonder of a crowd,
And swells with inward rapture at their shouts :
But he who bears the private ills of life,
With christian dignity and honest pride,
Insures the admiration of the good—
By thy duty then I do conjure thee,
Endure thy fate with manly fortitude.

Fos. Alas!—however others may support
A prison's dismal loneliness and gloom,
My heart cannot, but soon must break with woe:
Then stretch thy paternal arm I pray thee,
O rescue and protect thy wretched son!
Save him my father, from the worst of deaths,
The lingering tortures of a broken heart.

Doge. O my son!—thou hast prob'd thy father's soul.

Fos. I do conjure thee, in the name of Heav'n!
By every bond of nature and religion!
By thy eternal hopes of happiness
Hereafter! and by the tender bowels
Of a father, but exert thy influence
With the Council, to change their stern decree!

Doge. Is this my son!—see I the soldier front
Of Foscari, blur'd with a woman's tears?
Shall son of mine, recreant to his race,
So far forget the dignity of man,
As play the child and whimper at his fate!

Fos. Alas!—I feel I even am a child!
Yes—weaker than a child—a very babe—
'Tis not the fear of death, nor is it yet
The solitary humid cell, which fills
My soul with terrible dismay, but, 'tis
The pang of tearing me from thee, thou dearest,
Best of fathers!

Doge. My son, thou'lt make me weak as e'en thyself,
And wring the tears of anguish from mine eyes!

Fos. My pangs are too severe to be assuag'd
By tears: would that my tears could soften them!
But, feel the damp that's settled on my brow,
O!—'tis the sweat of agony—of death,
That only feeds upon my soul.

Doge. Cease, O! Cease—

Fos. Behold this pallid cheek—this languid frame,
View but thy wretched son, and call forth all
Thy pity—O!—look not thus upon me!
Avert that angry brow—Spare me! spare me!
What have I done to lose a parent's love?
Am I thus criminal?—Doth my father
Thus judge—condemn—nay—execute his son!

Doge. Thou dost not as becomes Foscari's son—
Weakness, such as this—will make me spurn thee.

"Submit my child unto thy country's laws,

"Nor ask of me, what 'tis not in my pow'r

"To obtain." [Exit in great agitation.

Fos. Then Fortune, hast thou shot away
Thy most malignant dart!—I may defy—
The deadliest barb, thy quiver doth contain!—
But now must I resume the man indeed—
Behold, here my dejected mother comes!

Enter Lady VALERIA.

Good my mother!—how fares it with thee?

Val. My soul is full, even unto bursting—
Thy mother comes to take her last farewell,
And to bid thee an adieu forever!

Fos. Say not forever!—we will meet again!

Val. Yes—we will meet again I trust, but not
This side the grave—but one step lies between
Thy mother and the tomb, and soon her frame
Must moulder in the dust.

Fos. Alas!—my mother!
Why with such cruel bodings, overwhelm
A heart, already sinking under grief!

Val. I come not to afflict thee with my tears,
But to beseech thee to support thyself,
As may become Foscari's noble house.

Fos. I merit not the priv'lege to call thee
Mother!—No—I am unworthy of thee;
An unworthy pillar of thy noble name—
How often hast thou clasp'd me to thy bosom,
Prest me with thy maternal tenderness!
Supported, carried me in those tender arms,
And would'st thou not then have me weep, when torn,
Unjustly torn away from such a mother!

Val. O my son!—This makes me again a mother!
Methought that I had lost a parent's feeling,
Or become callus to its soft control.

Enter OFFICER.

Officer. Officers are in waiting to conduct thee
To the ship—a favoring gale already
Swells our canvass, and straight we are about
To put to sea.

Fos. But some few moments more,
And then, I will be ready to depart.

[Exit Officer.]

Now, one word madam, then I must leave thee.

Val. Speak, my son, I will hear thee.

Fos. Almeria!

But let me not call her to my remembrance,
Else ev'ry former resolution's fled,
And I am nothing but a child again!

Val. Almeria loves thee—and the time may come,
When yet in her arms, thou may'st be happy.

Fos. O do not pamper me with groundless hopes!—
Did but the charming maid return my love,
Banishment—nay death, would lose its horrors.
But alas!—she hates—she abhors my sight:
Or lid she thus despise me for myself,
Did she but hate in me the man,—the pangs
Of losing her forever, would be light!

Val. Then if Almeria thus abhor thy sight,
Such rooted hate, should prove an antidote
Against the genuine fire of love: as well
Might water add new lustre to the blaze,
As love exist with such determin'd hate.

Fos. Almeria's hate springs, from a noble source:
So long as she believ'd me free from guilt
And deem'd me worthy to possess her love,
I held her bosom sacred to myself,
But when detraction had defil'd my name,
'Twas justly then, her love was chang'd to hate.
To thy maternal care then, I bequeath
Almeria—O prove to her a mother!

Val. Yes—for thy sake, I'll keep her in my heart!
With her, I'll share my love for thee!

Fos. But do not let her know, how much I love,
For could her heart, but once conceive the height

Of my unbounded adoration of her,
 Her gen'rous soul would melt with pity for me :—
 Breathe naught into her ear, that can afflict
 Or wound her gentle heart—for sooner far
 Would I endure forev'r, the ling'ring pangs,
 Which have so long prey'd on my vitals,
 Than cause that lovely breast to heave one sigh.

(Loud knocking at the door.)

Hark, there ! my fatal moment has arriv'd !

Val. O, Heav'n ! it is too much—must we then part ?

Fos. Farewell—my mother—we must part, indeed !

Val. Adieu my son ! and may the God of Heav'n

Once more restore thee to thy mother's arms ;

'T'ho' something whispers me, we part forev'r !

Fos. Forebode not evil—we will meet again.

Val. 'Tis death ! O, worse than death, thus to commit
 This outrage 'gainst my nature !

Enter ANNA, hastily.

Fos. Where is my father ?

Anna. Thy father overcome by grief, has swoon'd,
 And much is apprehended for his life.

Enter OFFICER.

Fos. Then let me fly to his assistance !

Officer. It is impossible—the vessel waits,
 And, Count, thou must begone.

Val. Base barbarians !

Ye will not refuse my son the priv'lege
 Once more to see his father, ere he sails ?

Officer. Lady, we must—our orders are explicit ;
 We dare not grant the privilege you seek.

Fos. By Heav'n ! I will behold my father. *(Going.)*

Officer. Count—

It is impossible—so intreat that thou
 Would follow us this instant to the ship.

Val. O, madness and distraction !—Foscari
 Shall not go hence, unless ye tear him from
 My arms.

Officer. We must this instant be obey'd.

(Laying hold of FOSCARI.)

Fos. Unhand me, villain !

Officer. Thou must follow us.

Fos. Stand off !

Officer. We are the officers of justice.

Fos. If ye were e'en the officers of hell,
'Tis thus, thus, and thus, I dare oppose you.

(*Endeavouring to disengage himself.*)

Officer. Dare you so much—this instant force him
hence !

(*They overpower FOSCARI, and drag him off.*)

Val. Help ! help ! O, Heav'n, help ! they murder my
child !

(*She faints and falls, ANNA goes to her assistance. Starting up wildly.*)

What ! have you then rescued him ?—O, speak—speak !
Where is my child ?—He's gone ! they'll murder him !
E'en now I hear his shrieks !—O, let me fly
To his assistance !

(*Going.*)

Enter DOGE.

Doge. Hold, hold, my belov'd !

Collect thyself, my Valeria, my wife !

Val. My lord, they have taken him hence—

I hear his shrieks e'en now !

Doge. O, be compos'd !

Val. Yes, my lord—I am compos'd—come near me !—

The storm of fate hath surely quite subsided,

And the false calm of sad despair succeeds.

(*Without.*) My lord !—My lord !—My lord Foscari !

(*Without.*) Speak—

Who calls thus loudly on my lord Foscari ?

(*Without.*) My lord Foscari !—Say—is he within ?

(*Without.*) He is here.

Doge. Who calls bid enter instantly.

Enter FISHERMAN, in haste.

Fish. My lord, count Erizzo !

Doge. What of the Count ?

Fish. He's dying, my lord, and would speak with thee.

Doge. Pray, why would count Erizzo speak with me ?

Lof C.

Fish. He spake of your son, and of a secret,
And of count Donato, and of yourself,
And of many things, I did not understand,
And seem'd my lord, in haste to speak with thee.

Doge. Spake he of count Donato?—where is he?

Fish. Hard by our little hut, not far from this—
Poor gentleman, he was beset by thieves,
And I fear he has receiv'd his death wound!
He seem'd distress'd, lest ere thou could'st arrive,
He should expire.

Val. Then, fly to him, my lord!
O! instantly fly, lest it be too late!

Doge. The dreadful secret stands expos'd to view!—
I go this instant.—Then lead thou the way.

[*Exeunt DOGE, FISHERMAN and SERVANTS.*]

(*A pause.*)

Val. O, Heav'n! how are my feelings harrow'd up!
Truly this life's a scene of dread alarm;
And to the fickle ocean, bears a just
Resemblance!—The calm that sometimes lulls us
To repose, but makes the tumbling billows,
Roar more dreadful, when the rude blasts are out,
And scowering the bosom of the main.—
Too long have I repos'd in ease and quiet;
Too long have I slept upon this tranquil sea,
Unconscious of the brewing of that storm,
Which now so loudly threatens to o'erwhelm me.

*Enter ALMERIA, drest fantastically, her hair flowing in
wild disorder.*

My sweet Almeria, how fares it with thee?

Alm. Good my lady, this is a day of mirth,
Of great rejoicing, throughout all Venice:
I am glad to day, my heart has holiday;
O, I could dance for joy!—But do you know
The cause of all this mirth? Young Foscari,
They say is to be married—O, no! he's dead!—
Dead? 'tis impossible!—No, no—not dead,
'Tis only five years since I saw him last,
So 'tis impossible he can be dead!

Val. Sweet Almeria, tell me the cause of this ?

Alm. Ha !—I see you're making preparations
For the wedding—look—I've adorn'd myself,
Altho' some told me 'twas a funeral.—

Val. Lovely Almeria !—thou wilt distract me !

Alm. Now, pray tell me—how do you like this hood ?
Say—doth it well become a youthful bride ?—
How gay you all appear !—They told me this,
To laugh at me !—Ah ! poor, poor Almeria !
She has no one now to love her !—No !—No !—
But no matter—I will dance and be happy—
Shall I dance for you lady ?—Nay—don't frown !
No—I'll sing a funeral dirge—because
Foscari is dead !—No one loves me now !

Val. I love thee, sweet maid—most dearly love thee :
Come, O, come my beloved to my arms !

Alm. Throw away that corps, then I will come to thee :
How can you hug that lifeless body so ?
See ! it is putrid—but it is Foscari's,
So I too, will clasp it to my bosom.

*(She rushes into VALERIA'S arms, then suddenly bursts into
a convulsive fit of laughter.)*

But I have no cause to laugh—he's dead !
I have cause to weep, for when he implor'd me
On his knees to hear him, why I did laugh---
How merry you all appear, while I am sad !---
Rejoice with me, lady---I am going to marry.
I have n't seen my intended husband yet,
'Tho I shall not take a grim lord to my arms.
---I shudder at the thought---for his touch they say
Is very cold---'twill chill my blood with horror !
But see---even the doge himself is merry ;
Merry, because his son's about to wed,
So I'll go deck his nuptial bed with flowers.

[*Exit.*]

Enter DOGE, hastily.

Doge. Rejoice, rejoice Valeria---for our son
Is innocent---now is the veil of mystery
Withdrawn, and the dark secret stands disclos'd.

Val. O, transporting news !

Doge. Then hear the dreadful tale ;
But first let servants be dispatch'd to stay
The departure of the vessel.

Val. O, fly---

[*Exit SERVANT, in haste.*]

Now my lord, I pray unfold the mysteries ;
And give a mother's aking soul relief.

Doge. Streach'd on some straw, beneath the fisher's
hut,

Besmeared with blood and dust, Erizzo lay :
His glaring eye-balls, seem'd as tho' they'd start
From out their sockets---he drew me near him---
He writh'd in agony and tried to speak :
At length, his voice, which seem'd quite choak'd with
blood,

Found utterance---he cried to Heav'n for mercy,
And beg'd all present, that they'd pray for him.
Suddenly he seiz'd my wrist, and held it
In the clammy grasp of death. Forgive me,
He cried, for I have injur'd thee. " Thy son
" Is innocent, as e'en the babe unborn !---"
O'ercome by the loss of blood, he fainted,
And with difficulty, we restor'd him.

Val. But did he not make known the villain's name
Who murder'd count Donato ?

Doge. He thus went on :

" Behold in me the wretch, who caus'd the death
" Of count Donato. One Policarpo,
" A mere creature of my own, was the fiend
" Employ'd by me to do this horrid deed."
He'd scarcely time to utter these last words,
When he was seiz'd with horrible convulsions,
And in most dreadful agonies, expir'd.

Val. Alas ! alas ! poor miserable wretch !
But what of Policarpo, whom thou namedst ?

Doge. His fate will sure be such as it deserves :
Him and his base accomplice, Gomez, nam'd,
I saw both drag'd to prison by the crowd.

Val. Then Heav'n be prais'd !---At length our troubles
cease :

We've only now, by kindness to restore
This lovely maid to reason---then---

Enter ALMERIA.

Doge. Almeria,
It was in attempting thy destruction,
That Count Erizzo met with his reward.

Alm. How do you like this furbelow, my Lord?
Will it grace Almeria for the wedding?
The pall-bearers are bespoken already!

Doge. Merciful Heav'n!—she is distracted!
Come my lov'd child to thy dear father's arms,
And let him sooth thee with his caresses.

Enter OFFICER in great haste.

Officer. My Lord, my Lord, how shall I tell the news?

Doge. The ship has sail'd perhaps—why alarm us?

Offi. O no my Lord—far worse—far worse, indeed!

Doge. Then proclaim the worst, that I may bear it.

Offi. My gracious Lord,—Your son is dead!

Val. O merciful Heav'n!

(Throws herself into a chair in speechless agony.)

Offi. The pain of parting with you was too much,
The fatal moment was too big with woe,
And, e're he reach'd the ship, he breath'd his last.

(Doge fixes his eyes in mute horror upon the floor.)

Alm. Dead! dead!—say, did you not say he was dead?—

Then is Almeria lost—she's lost forever!

Beloved lady, let me comfort thee:

But no, no,—I need comfort for myself—

I will go weave a shroud for Foscari.—

Now I may weep forever!—I am not mad.

Who dar'd say, I was distracted—Dead! dead!

Let these streaming locks veil me from those eyes,

Turn them not so pitiously upon me!—

Foscari!—thy lips are cold—let me feel—

Merciful Heav'n! cold—cold—and pale in death!

But why look so sad my Lord?—Thy son is marri'd.

Hark! hark!!—The death-bell tolls!—I go—I go

To meet my Foscari, who calls me hence.

[Exit in wild disorder.]

Doge. It is done!—the die is cast,
 My fate is now, decisively determin'd!
 Then let the whirlwind of calamity
 Rage on, let all the complicated ills
 Of life, join in the blast, to overwhelm
 Me with despair:—I can defy them all,
 For now I know the honor of my boy,
 Stands fair and unpolluted. Thanks to Heav'n,
 That I've liv'd to see this happy day!
 I shall defy the pangs of death, and laugh
 At ev'ry shaft that envy hath discharg'd
 Against me—But let me go seek my son,
 Let me haste to bedew his corse with tears,
 And embalm him with a father's blessings.
 But my Valeria, my beloved wife,
 Awake, awake from this thy lethargy.

Val. O would to Heav'n, I could never wake
 Again! 'tis too much my Lord—Distraction
 Hath twin'd itself about my very soul,
 Where, O where, shall I pour out all my grief,
 Where vent my agony of woe!

Doge. Vent it here!
 Here within the bosom of thy husband!
 He, he, can bear it all!——
 Gracious Heav'n!—what am I still to endure!—
 Here—bring in my boy—give him to my arms.
(The dead body of Foscari is brought in on a bier.)
 And though his limbs be cold and cramp'd in death,
 Still let me clasp him to my bosom.

Val. My son!
(Throwing herself on the dead body.)
 O my son, my son! look on thy parent!
 But cast thine eyes on thy distracted mother,
 And calm the agonies that rend her soul!
 O speak!—speak to her my son!—Thy mother,
 It is thy mother who implores thee speak!——
 But no! Thy lips are cold and clos'd in death forever,
 And I shall never hear thy cheering voice again!

Enter ALMERIA wildly.

Alm. My heated brain can no where find relief,
Despair is all that poor Almeria seeks,
Despair, despair, distraction and the grave!

(*ALMERIA, discovering the dead body, shrieks, and fainting, is about to sink upon the bier, when the DOGE supports her over the dead body of his son. The curtain gradually falls to solemn music.*)

FINIS.

EPILOGUE.

BY MR. CARPENTER.

SPOKEN BY MRS. WHITLOCK.

MRS. WHITLOCK comes forward, on tiptoe, looking carefully about, as if fearful of being observed by the players.

HUSH !—Let me look round me ere I speak,
(And speak I must, or else my heart will break,)
For were I heard by these same fustian factors,
Whom fortune's errors, or their own make actors ;
Blabbing my thoughts, I'm not without my fears,
That I should get it on both sides my ears.

Looks about again to the wings.

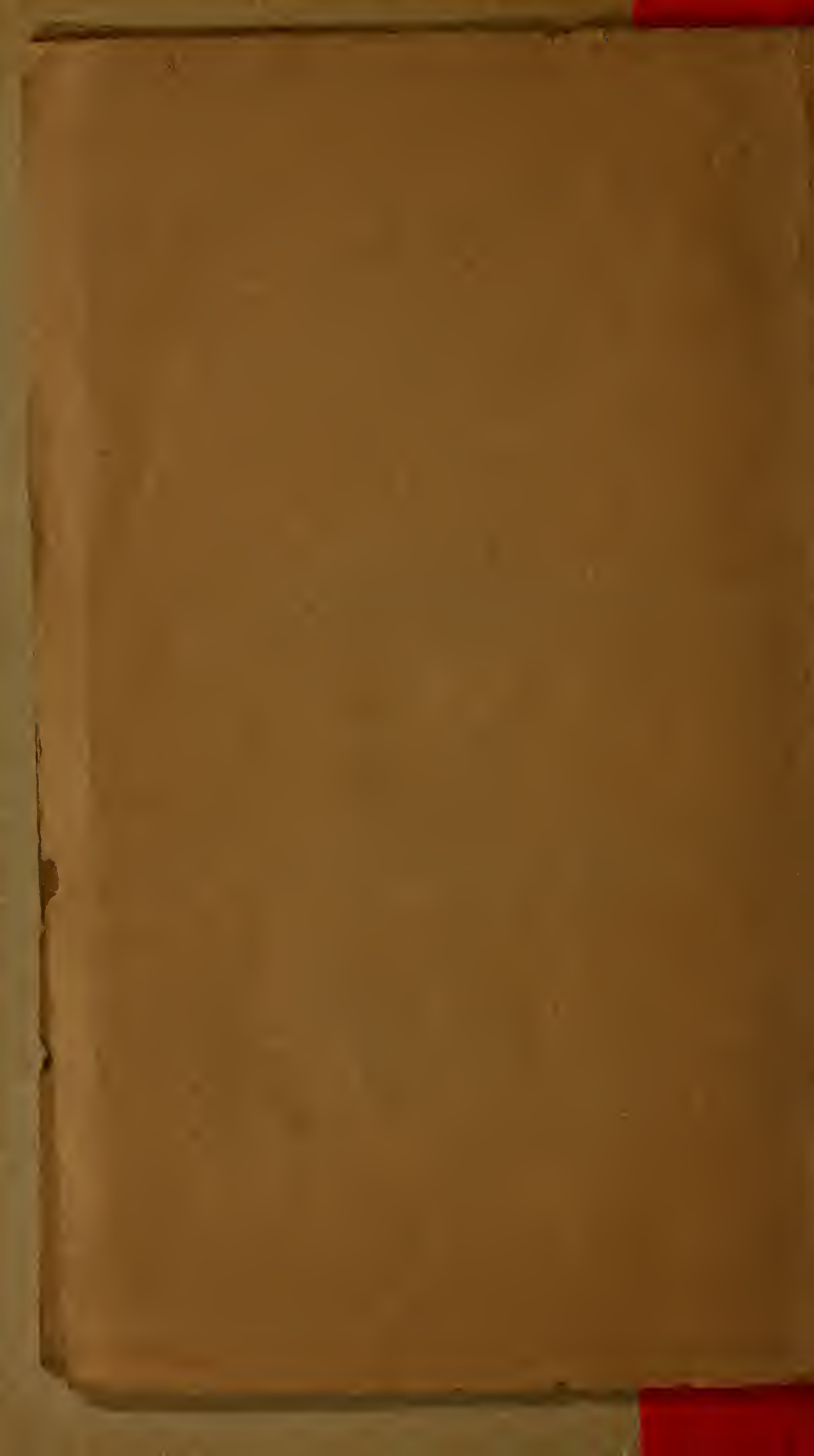
Ay—They're all gone I see—Then *entre nous*,
About our trade, I'll hint a word or two ;
And as our sex is privileg'd to say,
What e'er occurs—I'll speak about the play—
'Mongst us, in one short evening, you may scan,
The long and comprehensive life of man.
Like man, we oftimes wear a face of woe,
While joys tumultuous in our bosoms glow ;
Like man we laugh, as if with mirth half mad,
While all within, is sorrowful and sad.
As with dissembled grief, the new fledg'd heir,
Shrouded in black, affects to drop a tear ;
So with fond thoughts, a *Lear* or *Kolla* dies,
While his sly sweetheart, waits for him to rise—
And many a *Falstaff*, chuckles through his part,
While festering sorrows rankle at his heart.
As jerry'd husbands, wishing for relief
Affect to laugh, while whimpering with grief.

To night, you've heard us Oh ! and Ah ! and moan.
 Blubber, wipe eyes, and sob and sigh, and groan ;
 And whose sobs, sighs or groans were louder than my own? }
 Yet shall I say it— Nay, in faith 'twill out—
 While I was making all this tragic rout,
 About these children of our poet's brain,
 The Doge, Foscari, and the ladies twain,
 I felt my heart for joy within me bound,
 To see this goodly groupe collected round,
 To make our bard with honest transport glow,
 While he melts you with sympathetic woe.

A truce with tears then—and with me rejoice ;
 Hear reason's dictates, urg'd in nature's voice !
 Be wise and merry—and this truth believe
 If grief were wisdom, very few would grieve.—
 Rejoice with me, to see brought forth to light,
 The first born of our tragic muse, this night,
 Applaud the youth—Applaud with heart and hand,
 Who makes this offering to his native land.



1890





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